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- (1) Upper House by-elections: Ruling and opposition candidates neck and neck in Okinawa; Minshuto enjoys lead in Fukushima

YOMIURI (Page 3) (Abridged)
April 16, 2007

The Yomiuri Shimbun conducted on April 15 telephone-based opinion surveys ahead of the April 22 Upper House by-elections in Okinawa and Fukushima prefectures. In Okinawa, Aiko Shimajiri (backed by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the New Komeito) and Yoshimasa Karimata (endorsed by the opposition Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan), the Japanese Communist Party, the Social Democratic Party, and the People's New Party) are neck and neck. In Fukushima, LDP-backed Isamu Yamaguchi is closing the gap on Minshuto-endorsed Teruhiko Mashiko. Campaigning between the two camps is intensifying, as seen in frequent stumping tours by opposition party executives.

Candidates in Fukushima

7 Teruhiko Mashiko, 59, former Lower House lawmaker, endorsed by Minshuto
7 Isamu Yamaguchi, 69, former prefectural assembly speaker, backed by LDP
7 Shitsui Miyamoto, 54, former prefectural assembly member, endorsed by JCP

Candidates in Okinawa

7 Hiroyuki Kinjo, 68, company executive, independent
7 Yoshimasa Karimata, 57, former Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation) Okinawa chapter chairman, backed by Minshuto, JCP, SDP, and PNP
7 Aiko Shimajiri, 42, former Naha city assembly member, endorsed by LDP and New Komeito

In the poll in Okinawa, a little less than 80 PERCENT of LDP supporters and over 70 PERCENT of New Komeito supporters said they would vote for Shimajiri. Slightly less than 90 PERCENT of Minshuto

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supporters and nearly 70 PERCENT of JCP and SDP backers indicated their intention to vote for Karimata.

In Fukushima, Mashiko has consolidated over 70 PERCENT of support among Minshuto backers. Yamaguchi has consolidated slightly less than 50 PERCENT and 40 PERCENT of support among LDP and New Komeito backers, respectively.

The situation may change, as over 30 PERCENT of respondents in Okinawa and about 50 PERCENT of voters in Fukushima indicated that they have yet to decide whom they would vote for. In the survey conducted on randomly selected voters, respondents came from 1,052 persons (59 PERCENT) in Fukushima and 856 persons (50 PERCENT) in Okinawa.

Okinawa

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Okinawa yesterday to stump for Aiko Shimajiri in Naha, Urasoe, Okinawa, and even Miyako Island. At those places, Abe, clad in a laid-back Okinawa shirt, vowed to revitalize the local economy, playing up the positive results brought about by the government's structural reform drive over the last six years.

The LDP's failure to win the two by-elections would bode ill for the ruling coalition to secure a majority in the Upper House election this summer. Upper House LDP Caucus Chairman Mikio Aoki also decided at a pep rally in Naha on April 14 that the future of the LDP-New Komeito coalition and the Abe administration hinges on the results of the upcoming by-elections. LDP workers have been stationed in Okinawa, where Shimajiri and Karimata are competing with each other fiercely since early March to tighten the LDP's grip on local industrial associations.

Minshuto President Ichiro Ozawa, his deputy Naoto Kan, and Secretary General Yukio Hatoyama also visited Naha yesterday to stump for Karimata to demonstrate the party's commitment to Okinawa. The three canvassed the city's downtown area for about half an hour along with SDP head Mizuho Fukushima and the PNP's Tamisuke Watanuki.

Ozawa harshly criticized the ruling coalition, saying, "We need to

put an end to this system which is harsh to the socially weak and to the rural areas."

Minshuto intends to focus on correcting disparities among regions. This strategy comes from the party's failure to get its candidate elected in last year's Okinawa gubernatorial race. That candidate had called for an immediate closure of the US Marines' Futenma Air Station.

The Minshuto Okinawa election campaign office also began full-fledged activities on April 13. Hatoyama and Kan pressed yesterday afternoon local campaign staffers to brace themselves for the upcoming race.

Fukushima

LDP Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa stumped yesterday for Isamu Yamaguchi in four places, including Iwaki and Shirakawa cities. Nakagawa played up the Abe administration's efforts to reform the economy to create a society where everyone shares the same pain, highlighting the need to have a ruling lawmaker for winning funds for public works projects there.

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LDP deputy secretaries general have made many trips to Fukushima to stump for Yamaguchi by putting LDP overtones to the forefront. Nakagawa's visit to the prefecture yesterday was his seventh.

All Minshuto executives also visited Fukushima to stump for Mashiko, who is enjoying a lead. Hatoyama still warned the party from Okinawa yesterday that the largest opposition party must not be overly optimistic about the Fukushima race.

To illustrate the growing income disparity, Hatoyama said in a street-corner speech yesterday: "(Per capita) income in Tokyo is 1.8 million yen higher than that in Fukushima. This is unreasonable, and politics must take the blame for it."

In last year's gubernatorial race, the candidate backed jointly by Minshuto and the SDP achieved victory under the theme of "the people's party." Motivated by that race, the largest opposition plans to capitalize on the national recognition of Mashiko, who served three terms in the Lower House, rather than to highlight Minshuto features.

Abe views Futenma Air Station

Prime Minister Abe took a first look at Futenma Air Station yesterday from Kakazu Takadai Park in Ginowan, Okinawa Prefecture.

Standing besides Abe, Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima expressed hopes for an early relocation of the airfield, saying: "The base sits in the densely-populated residential areas. We want to see the base removed as soon as possible." In response, Abe indicated that the government would relocate it to the coastal area of Camp Schwab upon obtaining local support, saying: "We will push ahead with the relocation plan while hearing local views. We will work hard to meet your request swiftly."

(2) Prime Minister Abe: I will listen to views of local residents" on Futenma relocation

RYUKYU SHIMPO (Page 2) (Full)
April 16, 2007

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe visited Okinawa on April 15 for the first time since he assumed office in order to support campaigns for the Upper House Okinawa local elections and the Upper House by-election. With Okinawa Gov. Hirokazu Nakaima as his guide, the prime minister inspected the US Marine Corps' Futenma Air Station from the Kakazu-Takadai Park in Ginowan City. Abe is the first incumbent prime minister to have made an inspection of the Futenma base. Pointing out the danger of the air station, which is located in an urban district, the governor demanded early relocation of the Futenma base. Abe then visited the city of Miyakojima. Abe is the

first prime minister to have visited Miyakojima in 42 years, since Eisaku Sato went there in 1965 when the island was returned to Japanese rule.

After inspecting the Futenma base, Abe delivered a street-corner speech, in which he took a cooperative stance with local residents. He stated:

"The Futenma Air Station, which carries risk as it is located in an urban area, should be relocated as quickly as possible. I will hear the views of the governor and local residents on the relocation of

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the base."

He also expressed a positive stance toward an idea of expanding Naha Airport. He said:

"In order to realize Gov. Nakaima's campaign pledge to boost the number of visitors traveling to Okinawa to several tens of millions of people. The airport has to be expanded. I will give top priority to the expansion of the airport."

He stated this on the realignment of US forces in Japan:

"Easing the burden of US military bases on the residents of Okinawa is my responsibility. I think we should actively use the land at Futenma after that base is relocated."

At the Kakazu-Takadai Park, Akira Uehara, head of the governor's office, briefed Abe on the general outline of the Futenma base. While showing a picture of the accident site where a US military helicopter crashed into the ground at Okinawa International University, Nakaima stressed problems to Abe, saying, "Since the air station is located in the middle of the city, it is dangerous and noisy."

In the city of Miyakojima, Abe toured a facility producing a bio-ethanol fuel by a sugar fermentation process that uses sugarcane. On a three percent ethanol-mixed gasoline car (E3), the prime minister arrived in a place where he was going to give a speech. Bio-ethanol is the most environment-friendly fuel in the world. The nation proactively supports this kind of technology." Earlier in the day Abe attended a funeral at the Air Self-Defense Force's Naha base for four crew members of a ground-Self-Defense Forces helicopter killed in a crash last month while on a medical transport mission. He then visited the National Cemetery for Okinawa the War Dead to offer flowers.

(3) National referendum bill setting constitutional amendment procedures: Prime Minister Abe's arbitrary act might create rift between, LDP and New Komeito, even with Lower House approves the bill

MAINICHI (Page 2) (Full)
April 13, 2007

The outlook is that concrete procedures to amend the Constitution will be set for the first time in the 61 years since the national constitution came into force. Since the bill setting procedures is designed to revise the supreme law, the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, its coalition partner New Komeito, and the largest opposition party initially aimed to reach an agreement. However, after Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gave the command, a special committee of the House of Representatives voted on the measure (and subsequently the bill cleared the chamber). However, important debate on what, when and how the Constitution will be amended was never conducted.

Former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who assumed the chairmanship of a suprapartisan parliamentary group aiming at creating an independent constitution, praised Abe on April 5 at the Prime Minister's Official Residence, saying, "Since you are the first postwar prime minister tackling straightforwardly constitutional reform, I accepted the offer to head the parliamentary group." Abe then responded with a smile: "I am grateful that you accepted the post. I would like you to push

forward to build popular acceptance as to why constitutional amendments are needed."

However, Abe's stance of stressing his reform orientation made it impossible for joint actions among the LDP, New Komeito and Minshuto (Democratic Party of Japan) to modify the bill.

In his press conference on Jan. 4 for the New Year, Abe positioned constitutional reform as a campaign issue for the House of Councillors election this summer, saying, "In campaigning for the Upper House election, I will stress my intention to aim a amend the Constitution."

Abe regards himself as a member of the conservative mainstream, so for him, picking up the challenge to amend the Constitution has become symbolic with his political stance of breaking away from the "postwar regime." With his popularity on the decline, should the national referendum bill, following the passage of a bill revising the Basic Education Law late last year, clear the Diet, the ruling coalition will be able to strengthen its conservative base in the Upper House.

Minshuto President Ichiro Ozawa has accepted Abe's challenge. Caught up in standoff between the two party heads, joint amendments looked into by lawmakers from the three parties collapsed.

However, Abe has yet to speak up his blueprint for constitutional reform. He reportedly stated emotionally in a meeting in January in Tokyo: "No matter how difficult constitutional reform is, we must continue speaking about it; otherwise we will never accomplish our desire." Abe's aide said: "To keep calling for constitutional reform seems to be Abe's mission." As if responding to Abe's focusing on just repeating the constitutional-reform mantra, a mood calling for constitutional amendment has kicked in.

There is no surge in momentum of calling constitutional amendments even in the LDP, which announced a draft plan for a new constitution 18 months ago.

In order to promote a debate on constitutional reform, the LDP last October upgraded its Research Commission (chosakai) on the Constitution to the status of a council (shingikai). However, the council has yet to resume debate since its head has not been chosen. Although Upper House Caucus Chairman Yoichi Masuzoe in February called on former Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori to set up a new panel to be headed by him, not much progress has occurred. Masuzoe, however, is critical of addressing constitutional reform a campaign issue for the Upper House election, arguing:

"Unless 70 to 80 PERCENT of the people approve constitutional revision, amending the Constitution will be difficult. Under the present situation, a campaign pledge to amend the Constitution will not lead to gaining votes."

One of the reasons for no surge in momentum for constitutional reform in the LDP is "the national referendum bill itself," said one LDP member. That is because the legislation includes the New Komeito's view that during the three years from the proclamation of national referendum law until the law's going into effect, a review of constitutional reforms bills and submission of them be prohibited.

One senior member of the New Komeito, which has called for upholding

Article 9 of the Constitution, expects that if more time is taken, the view held by some of protecting the constitution from change will grow. Party head Akihiro Ota has repeatedly told the prime minister: "It will take a long time to amend the Constitution."

The New Komeito has insisted that one vote should be taken on each article. The party has a strategy of gradually making clear its

opposition to the LDP draft proposals, advocating that it will be difficult to completely change the Constitution by a national referendum.

Ota warned Abe on March 23: "Making constitutional reform a campaign issue for the Upper House election and constitutional reform actually becoming a campaign issue are two different things." Ota meant that the public are not interested in amending the Constitution, but Abe reportedly fended him off, saying, "Do you think constitutional reform will become a main issue in the campaign for the Upper House election?" After the national referendum becomes law, the gaps between the LDP and New Komeito might become more pronounced.

(4) Editorial: Decline of ODA; Maintain presence using various methods

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)
April 13, 2007

The track record of Japan's official development assistance (ODA) last year plunged 11.7 PERCENT from the previous year. Japan's ranking as an ODA donor slipped to third place, overtaken by Britain. Japan has had no other choice but to cut the ODA budget, as it is in the process of reconstructing its finances. The issue of Japan can maintain its presence in the international community has become a major agenda item.

Japan once held the top slot, but it was first overtaken by the US and now by Britain. The drop is mainly attributable to a substantial decrease in debt reduction offered to Iraq in 2005. Japan's ODA dropped to 0.25 PERCENT in gross national profit terms as well, a long way from industrialized countries' target of 0.7 PERCENT .

The basic policy guidelines on economic and fiscal management and structural reforms issued last year noted that the ODA budget should be cut 2 PERCENT -4 PERCENT each year in order to turn the primary balance into black in fiscal 2011. It is projected that Japan will fall to fifth slot, overtaken by France and Germany in the near future. Many are concerned about Japan's ODA presence continue to wane.

However, Japan's ODA is still way above that of the US in gross national income terms. It must be remembered that there is the aspect of the fluctuation of ODA being determined by fiscal conditions of the time.

European countries started increasing ODA budgets from around 2000, the millennium and the year when they achieved fiscal reconstruction. Japan's ODA continued to increase even after the collapse of the economic bubble, but it took a downturn in the same year.

Japan's international contributions, even at a time when it was suffering from a pronouncedly deteriorating fiscal situation among industrialized countries, fully deserve global recognition. Another

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major factor for the drop in the track record of ODA is a sharp increase in the repayment of yen loans by Southeast Asian countries. These countries ceased to be recipient countries, proving that Japan's aid had been successful.

However, maintaining presence with a limited ODA budget requires various resourcefulness. Cutting the cost of projects will lead to an increase in the volume of projects. Using private-sector human resources and know-how will also be essential.

Demand for yen loans is still high. Yen loans to China will be ended -- visiting Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao did not directly express gratitude for yen loans to China. In India, which is pro-Japanese and a key country in security terms, the construction of social infrastructure will move into full scale. Yen loans will also be effective in nurturing petty, small and medium-size businesses in African countries.

ODA is still a major diplomatic tool for Japan. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), which is to be reorganized into the Overseas Economic Cooperation Council chaired by the prime minister, will be required to develop a highly sophisticated strategy.

(5) Facts about SDF deployment in Iraq (Section 2); Thinking of SDF as Japan's new garrison-SDF in transformation (Part 4): Support pact-Integration going on with US military

TOKYO (Top play) (Full)
March 29, 2007

Ali Al Salem Air Base in Kuwait is the largest base of that country's air force.

There are four aircraft shelters standing along a runway of the airbase. All those shelters remain wrecked. When the airbase was under the Iraqi military's occupation in the 1991 Gulf War, US military jets conducted pinpoint airstrikes on those shelters, targeting Iraqi troops stationed there.

One of those wrecked shelters has a hole on its ceiling. Three blue-gray C-130 transport planes dispatched from Japan's Air Self-Defense Force are parked on an apron in front of that shelter. "Powder-like sands get in, so we don't turn on the air-conditioning until right before taking off," says Sgt. Atsushi Hoshino, a 34-year-old maintenance service crewman. "The temperature in the aircraft goes up to 70 degrees (centigrade) when we're doing maintenance service," the sergeant added.

Near the shelter is a hangar. The ASDF built the hangar to protect its aircrafts and members from the severe environment. The hangar is now in the US military's use.

In the two midsummer months of June and August 2005, gray-coated US Air Force C-130 transport planes were housed in the hangar for a total of four periods from four to eight days. "We can use the hangar again after they return it, so the hangar is offered to them for nothing," a Defense Ministry official said.

That year, the ASDF provided the US Air Force twice with C-130 parts and was supplied seven times with componentry from the USAF. In addition, the ASDF used the US military's toilet-cleaning equipment four times for its C-130s.

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The ASDF owes much to the US military. Its supply of air fuel to the ASDF's Kuwait-based detachment amounts to as much as 140 kiloliters a year. "The ASDF has dispatched about 200 personnel there," says Col. Hirohide Inoue, 45, chief coordinator in the Air Staff Office's Logistics Planning Division. Inoue went on: "The ASDF is provided with air fuel from the US Air Force, so we can somehow manage to do things at this level of personnel. If we've got to do everything ourselves, we will have to send more personnel. As a result, the ASDF's burden will be heavier."

What makes it possible for Japan and the United States to replenish each other with supplies is a bilateral arrangement, which is called the Japan-US Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA). The two countries return supplies in kind. However, they may also cash in.

At one time, the Defense Agency-the Defense Ministry's predecessor-issued a notification in the name of its administrative deputy director general's name to let the Maritime Self-Defense Force refuel US naval vessels only when MSDF vessels participate in the Rim-of-the Pacific joint naval maneuvers (RIMPAC) conducted in waters off Hawaii under the US Navy's initiative. Japan and the United States thereafter strengthened their bilateral cooperation. In 1996, the Japanese and US governments issued a bilateral joint declaration on security. At the same time, the two governments entered into ACSA.

At first, ACSA was only applicable to bilateral joint training

exercises between Japan and the United States as well as to United Nations peacekeeping operations. However, ACSA, as a result of its two revisions, expanded its applicable scope to contingencies in the periphery of Japan and emergencies in Japan. Later on, ACSA's applicable scope was further expanded to the Self-Defense Forces' overseas activities conducted under the Antiterror Special Measures Law or otherwise under the Iraq Special Measures Law.

The SDF-with its members deployed in Iraq-came under ACSA at once. In Kuwait, for instance, Ground Self-Defense Force members stayed at a US Army camp where they were served with provisions. They were airlifted to Iraq on ASDF C-130 transport planes. After their arrival in Iraq, they received similar support from US forces in Ali (formerly Taril).

As is evident from such cases, the SDF's Iraq mission cannot go it alone without its integration with US forces. This also seems to be why the ASDF is tasked with airlift activities mainly for US troops.

Ali Al Salem Air Base also hosts troops from the Republic of Korea. The ASDF, according to its officer, provides no supplies to the ROK forces because Japan and the ROK have no arrangement like ACSA. However, a Defense Ministry official explains that the Iraq Special Measures Law prescribes a clause of "transfer" and "nonreimbursable loan," which is applicable to South Korean forces as well.

At the airbase, the ASDF has invested a total of 2.3 billion yen for its hangar, billeting and recreational quarters, and some other buildings. "In time," another Defense Ministry official says, "the SDF will withdraw." This official added: "All these buildings are therefore regarded as temporary installations. We cannot say these buildings are state-owned assets, and it's incorrect to say these facilities are under (Japan's) occupation."

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When deploying overseas, the SDF sets up a base on the premises of a base in a foreign land to team up with armed forces from foreign countries. This framework has already been established. In December last year, the Self-Defense Forces Law was revised to task the SDF with overseas activities as part of its primary missions. The law just caught up with the facts to endorse what the SDF is actually doing.

(6) Japan @ World by Yoichi Funabashi: Japan needs to be further involved in six-party talks

ASAHI (Page 4) (Slightly abridged)
April 16, 2007

Yoichi Funabashi

US Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill is an ardent fan of the Boston Red Sox.

Last November, when pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka decided to transfer to the Red Sox, Hill yelled with delight. Immediately after the revelation of this decision, Hill engaged in talks with North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye Gwan on the issue of the 25 million dollars frozen at North Korea-related bank accounts at Banco Delta Asia (BDA) in Macao.

Hill was too excited to solemnly engage in the talks.

"Matsuzaka will transfer to the Red Sox. The transfer money is 51 million dollars."

"Matsuzaka?"

Kim had no idea who was Matsuzaka. He stared at Hill with wonder.

"Why is that huge amount of money paid to only one person?"

"Indeed, it is a large sum of money, more than double 25 million dollars."

Their conversation moved from this topic to how to launch a framework for US-North Korea talks to discuss the lifting of the sanctions against the North. Last week, the US government announced it would lift the freeze on the DPRK's funds at the BDA, and this has now enabled North Korea to withdraw its deposits there. But the North Koreans have neither shut down nor sealed their nuclear reactor at Yongbyon yet.

America's lifting of the sanctions against the North has somehow brought the six-party talks to the point of going to bat in the direction of denuclearizing the North. If the North reports on all its nuclear programs and disables all existing nuclear facilities, the multilateral talks will advance to first base. Then, full-fledged energy assistance by every member nation will start. The six-party talks can advance to second base if they succeed in obtaining the North's commitment to abandon the nuclear enrichment program that triggered a nuclear crisis this time. The talks would reach third if they are successful in making the North dispose of its nuclear weapons tested last October and nuclear materials. The multilateral talks will reach home plate if they thoroughly inspect and confirm whether the North has scrapped all of its nuclear programs and facilities. Unless all this is done, no path for

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diplomatic normalization between the US and North Korea and between Japan and North Korea can be set. There is a long way to go, however.

In addition, the abduction issue stands in the way for Japan and North Korea to normalize diplomatic ties. Tokyo has proclaimed that it will not assist North Korea in the energy area unless the abduction issue makes headway. Pyongyang's position is that the abduction issue has already been settled. Japan does not intend to take part in the energy assistance scheme for the time being. The North has called Japan a country disqualified to be a member of the six-party talks. Japan is not necessarily going along with four other member nations of the talks: the US, China, South Korea, and Russia.

One South Korean diplomat I met in Beijing told me: "Everybody initially showed sympathy for the abducted victims. But the Japanese government has reiterated the same thing at every session under the six-party talks. I therefore have sent my home government this kind of telegram concerning Japan's chief negotiator's statements: 'His statements focused solely on the abduction issue as he did in the last session with no fresh argument.'"

Former US Secretary of State Kissinger, who was recently visiting Japan, queried ranking Japanese officials: "What would be a resolution to the abduction issue? Could you tell me the definition?" Reportedly, however, no clear-cut answer was given to him.

I doubt whether the Japanese government really has an answer to that question. In the Diet, both arguments crop up: one is "Japan must not be left behind the US and North Korea over the nuclear issue" and the other is "Japan should resolutely deal with the abduction issue, aside from America's or North Korea's motives."

"The prevailing view is that Japan has received the cold shoulder and has been isolated in the six-party talks," a high-level US government official analyzed. This view implies the feeling that: Japan has been betrayed by the US, which has rushed to reach agreement in talks with North Korea. Voices of distrust of the US are in fact heard, for instance, the US is spoiling North Korea; the US is about to launch "arms control" talks with the North; and America's "nuclear umbrella" has holes in it now.

Partly because the six-party talks were started under the initiative of the US and China, Japan has so far tended to participate in the sessions with a passive attitude and has failed to make strategic decisions. But it is incorrect to say that Japan has been placed in an isolated situation in the six-party talks.

Japan needs to cool-headedly analyze the limits of the six-party

talks. Specifically, the multilateral talks eventually allowed the North to conduct a nuclear test. The North Koreans appear to be performing "brinkmanship" acrobatics under a safety net called the six-party talks. North Korea indeed may not abandon its nuclear programs.

Nevertheless, Japan should pursue the possibility of the six-party talks as far as it can. If nuclear proliferation were to occur at this point, relations among Japan, China, and South Korea could assume an aspect of xenophobic nationalism and be filled with a sense of fear. In this case, Japan would find itself in a most difficult situation among those member nations.

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The six-party talks could serve as a first multifaceted process in the history of this region for peace and stability. Japan's strategic challenge will be to grope to find the best possibilities of applying this process, including an opportunity for the Japan-US alliance and the US-South Korea alliance to be linked to a regional framework in Northeast Asia. The first ordeal for Japan is to actively participate in the process of bringing about the abandonment of the North's nuclear programs and by so doing, to acquire multifaceted diplomatic skills. There is no choice but to resolve the nuclear issue and the abduction issue within a multifaceted process. Preparing for that requires a strategic decision.

Let me add some points of my own in this regard.

7 Maintain a firm relationship of trust between Japan and the US in a way that is linked to the bilateral alliance, which has the capability to keep the region stable on the basis of the US Forces Japan.

7 Pursue a resolution of the abduction issue while linking it to the nuclear issue. Unfold a diplomacy that will boost, if possible, the efforts to resolve the nuclear issue and use Japan's active handling of the issue to increase multifaceted pressure on North Korea in the area of the abduction issue.

7 Prepare an "exit plan" for a resolution to the abduction issue while pressing ahead on it. Consider the abduction issue in light of diplomacy instead of as a movement.

The question is not a choice between the two: nuclear and abductions. This is not the question, either, of which issue comes first. Japan is indeed urged to make a strategic decision.

SCHIEFFER